

EPA Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

Westwego, LA

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5105)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA has selected the City of Westwego for a Brownfields Pilot. Westwego is located southwest of New Orleans, directly across the Mississippi River. Twenty-four percent of the city's 11,218 residents live below the poverty level, and unemployment stands at 8.5 percent. Traditionally, city residents made a living from fishing in nearby wetlands and from manufacturing, transportation, and commercial enterprises. These industries faded out and left behind brownfields that contribute to environmental degradation and impede economic growth.

Through community-based efforts, the Pilot is designed to redevelop two key brownfields, an abandoned airport and a historical district. In addition, the Pilot would assist in the revitalization of a third area that is presently undergoing cleanup. All three of these areas are located near low-income and minority communities. The Pilot will promote job creation and eco-tourism within Westwego and the neighboring Bayou Segnette State Park and Jean Lafitte National Park.

PILOT SNAPSHOT



Westwego, LA

Date of Announcement:
May 2000

Amount: \$200,000

Profile: The Pilot targets three brownfield areas near minority and low-income housing to promote economic development and eco-tourism.

Contacts:

City of Westwego
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Regional Brownfields Team
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Visit the EPA Region 6 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/earth1r6/6sf/bfpages/sfbfhome.htm>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

OBJECTIVES

The Pilot will build on the success of the New Orleans, Gretna, and Southeast Regional Planning Commission Brownfields Pilot programs to promote community-based environmental planning and remove existing barriers to redeveloping the city's brownfields properties. The Pilot is concentrated on three areas: the Westwego Airport property, the Sala Avenue historic district, and the Fourth Street area. Following purchase of the airport property, which will be redeveloped as a wetland recreation area tailored to the needs of physically handicapped visitors, Pilot funds will help the city in outreach efforts to publicize the availability of commercial sites. Within the Sala Avenue historic district, Pilot funds will promote community-based redevelopment of two prominent brownfields. Finally, in the Fourth Street area, the Pilot will assist the city in outreach efforts to develop an area reuse plan.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of this Pilot include:

- Performing environmental assessments on targeted properties;
- Performing community outreach including public meetings; and
- Developing site cleanup and reuse plans.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.